

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 USSS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

ACDA-19 IO-14 DRC-01 /144 W
----- 034684

P R 090900Z NOV 73

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0619

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USINT CAIRO POUCH

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 0592

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IZ XF

SUBJ: IRAQ AND THE WAR

1. ON NOV 2 EGYPTIAN CHARGE BARAKA GAVE COLUMNIST ROWLAND EVANS
AND ME FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF IRAQI ACTIONS DURING WAR:

2. INITIAL IRAQI REACTION WAS WAR IMPERIALIST PLOT WHICH ARABS
SHOULD AVOID. HE WAS CALLED BY FORMIN ABDUL BAQI EVENING OF OCT
6 AND TOLD 12 IRAQI HAWKER HUNTERS IN EGYPT WOULD PARTICIPATE.
ON OCT 7 HE CALLED BACK AND ASKED TO PROVIDE FROM SADAT EXACTLY
WHAT EGYPTIAN AIMS WERE AND WHETHER WAR TO BE SERIOUS ONE.
IMMEDIATE EGYPTIAN RESPONSE WAS THAT WAR VERY SERIOUS, BUT
OBJECTIVES LIMITED TO REGAINING TERRITORY OCCUPIED SINCE JUNE

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1967 AND THAT EGYPT WOULD ACCEPT CEASE-FIRE WHEN IT WAS CERTAIN

OBJECTIVE WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED. BARAKA ADDED THAT SOVIETS DID NOT KNOW TIMING BUT HAD GIVEN EGYPT GUARANTEE OF SUPPORT FOR THIS LIMITED OBJECTIVE.

3. IRAQ HAD RESPONDED THAT IT WOULD PARTICIPATE IN MAJOR WAY ALTHOUGH AT NO TIME WAS IT REQUESTED TO. SYRIAN WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT IRAQI TROOPS OBTAINED QUICKLY. BEFORE SENDING TROOPS IRAQ HAD ASKED EGYPT TO OBTAIN ASSURANCE FROM IRAN THAT IT WOULD NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IRAQ IF TROOPS MOVED FROM IRANIAN BORDER. EGYPT HAD OBTAINED SHAH'S PERSONAL ASSURANCE. WAY WAS THUS CLEAR FOR RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WHICH IRAQ HAD WANTED FOR SOME TIME. BARAKA DID NOT GO INTO DETAILS, BUT FRENCH AMBASSADOR TOLD ME SHAH HAD ALSO GIVEN PROMISE OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN IRAQI INTERNAL AFFAIRS BECAUSE HE NOW CONCERNED ABOUT KURDISH NATIONALIST ACTIVITY IN IRAN.

4. IRAQI TROOPS WERE NOT GIVEN AMMUNITION UNTIL THEY ARRIVED IN SYRIA. DURING WAR THEY HAD FOUGHT WELL. BARAKA THOUGHT ONE BRIGADE HAD TAKEN ABOUT 60 PERCENT CASUALTIES. STORIES OF SYRIAN-IRAQI BAAATH RIVALRY INTERFERING WITH MILITARY OPERATIONS WERE EXAGGERATED. IRAQI TROOPS HAD NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, REPRESENTED ANY THREAT TO ASAD.

5. EGYPT HAD BEEN VERY POPULAR HERE FOR 10 DAYS. REACTION TO SADAT'S SPEECH OF OCT 17 WAS, HOWEVER, NEGATIVE BECAUSE OF ITS MODERATION. GOI SHOCKED BY EGYPTIAN ACCEPTANCE OF CEASE-FIRE SINCE NEITHER EGYPT NOR USSR HAD CONSULTED IRAQ. BARAKA CLAIMED EGYPT HAD NOT EVEN CONSULTED SYRIA. UPON ANNOUNCEMENT OF CEASE-FIRE FORMIN ABDUL BAQI HAD GONE TO DAMASCUS TO OBTAIN SYRIAN ASSURANCE THAT IT WOULD NOT ACCEPT CEASE-FIRE. SYRIA HAD GIVEN ASSURANCE AND ABDUL BAQI HAD GONE TO ALGIERS TO OBTAIN BOUMEDIENE'S BACKING AGAINST EGYPT AND THEN TO TRIPOLI. UPON ARRIVAL IN TRIPOLI HE HEARD SYRIA HAD ACCEPTED CEASE-FIRE. HE HAD RETURNED FURIOUS AND IRAQ HAD DECIDED TO PULL ITS TROOPS OUT OF SYRIA. BARAKA SAID ASAD HAD TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO PERSUADE IRAQ TO LET TROOPS REMAIN. THIS WAS ALSO MAIN PURPOSE OF YASSIR ARAFAT'S RECENT VISIT TO BAGHDAD. FRENCH AMBASSADOR SAID SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAD MADE TWO DEMARCHES FOR SAME PURPOSE. EGYPT'S FAILURE TO CONSULT BASED ON LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN IRAQI LEADERS.

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6. BARAKA DESCRIBED EGYPTIAN STRATEGY AS EMBRACING MILITARY POWER, WORLD OPINION AND OIL TO OBTAIN POLICIAL OBJECTIVE OF WITHDRAWAL AND FINAL SETTLEMENT. WAR WAS ONLY WAY OF GALVANIZING THESE ELEMENTS INTO EFFECTIVE FORM OF PRESSURE. EGYPTIAN POSITION IS NOT POPULAR HERE OR IN EGYPT. SADAT HAS, IN BARAKA'S VIEW, TAKEN MAJOR GAMBLE BY ACCEPTING CEASE-FIRE, NEGOTIATIONS, AND U.S. AS KEY TO SETTLEMENT. BARAKA BELIEVES SADAT CANNOT LAST MORE THAT SIX MONTHS UNLESS HE OBTAINS AT LEAST

90 PERCENT OF OCCUPIED TERRITORY. HE BELIEVES DISAPPEARANCE OF SADAT, MOST LIKELY BY MILITARY REGIME, WOULD BE DISASTEROUS FOR EGYPT AND AREA.

7. COMMENT: IRAQ HAS, BY WITHDRAWING TROOPS AND ADOPTING EXTREME POSITION, SEEMINGLY REMOVED ITSELF AS IMPORTANT FACTOR IN SETTLEMENT. IT HAS, HOWEVER, ALREADY MADE NEW GRANT OF 6.8 MILLION DOLLARS TO PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ELEMENTS. WHILE IRAQ'S GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION PERMITS IT LUXURY OF SUCH POLICY, IT IS ALSO BASED ON STRONG CONVICTION OF IRAQI LEADERS THAT NEITHER UN NOR US HAS WILL TO BRING ABOUT SETTLEMENT. THUS WHEN SETTLEMENT EFFORTS FAIL, IRAQ WILL BE IN POSITION TO TAKE LEAD IN ARAB AFFAIRS. IF SETTLEMENT BY CHANCE REACHED, REGIME CAN QUICKLY SWITCH ITS LINE TO MINIMIZE ISOLATION.

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